

D I E
AND BE
D A M N E D.

OR,

A Policy of Insurance against Methodism
and Enthusiasm.

*Infæliciter ægrotat, cui plus periculi a
medico quam morbo.*

SENECA.

The THIRD EDITION,
Revised and enlarged, by the AUTHOR.



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AUTHOR

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P R E F A C E.

 AMONG the various blessings we enjoy as Englishmen, and which give us a pre-eminence, over all other nations in the known world, the liberty of the press must be acknowledged one of the chief enjoyments we have to boast of; it may be called the firmest security, if not the foundation of all other *liberty*; and I dare venture to affirm, that no innovation in government can possibly take place while this grand bulwark of our lives and fortunes openly

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submits—Let it then be remembered with gratitude, and to the immortal honour of the illustrious house of Hanover, that not the least encroachment has been made, on this invaluable blessing, during their mild and gracious administration; and notwithstanding the heavy complaints we are continually making of venality and corruption, it has never yet been in the power of a minister, to stop the current of publication, nor has the arm of authority been lifted to punish any public writer, except he abused this glorious privilege, by prostituting it to the base designs of blasphemy, treason, or abandoned lewdness. Even personal abuse of the great, conveyed in the meanest and most scurrilous terms, has escaped unnoticed; and every public transaction, has been quietly suffered to undergo the scrutiny of the vilest of the Grub-street race. Witness the low, unmeaning witticisms, impertinent queries, and stupid

remarks, lately published on the affairs of the nation. In other countries our liberty of the press, is greatly inveighed against on account of such productions; but God forbid, we should institute a remedy worse than the disease, and subject every author to the partiality of an imprimatur, or the dread of a Bastile: if this was to be the case, how many valuable productions would be buried in oblivion for reasons of state by the former; and how many good authors would be deterred by the latter, from instructing and entertaining their countrymen! the enthusiast might then unnoticed, deal out damnation from the pulpit; for the dread of the Bastile, or a more infernal Inquisition, would silence all opposition.

I should not then stand up in defence of the powers of reason in matters of religion, or endeavour to dissuade the unwary from being caught in the snares of

religious politicians: a people who had so far lost their liberty as to submit to these tyrannical impositions, would not be worth reclaiming: but thanks be to God, far otherwise is the case at present with you my countrymen; and therefore I shall with freedom address myself to you in the following pages, on a religious enormity, which has lately got to such a height, that it calls aloud for the pen of some able writer to put a stop to its rapid progress, and prevent its baleful influence: I mean the modern practice of some divines, who preach eternal damnation, with as much eagerness and industry, as their heavenly master, when on earth, preached salvation; and who make no scruple publicly to declare, that unless you believe in Christ according to the singular principles of methodism, you must infallibly *die and be damned*.

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These words I have had thundered in my ears every time I have attended a once eloquent and sensible preacher: * these are the words that gave rise to this publication, and I shall think myself extremely happy, if my weak endeavours to serve the cause of true religion, should excite some able writer to prove, that these men are not the true disciples of Christ; and that they are by no means intitled to the character of being Christ's ambassadors here on earth. For my own part, I shall content myself with offering to the public my sentiments on this pernicious method of preaching, and I heartily wish I may so far succeed, as to lessen the number of their devotees, and consequently their salaries; for I am convinced that worldly interest is at the bottom of their enthusiastic declamations; and that all

* He was once reckoned a learned, and a good man; but now he can bear to be called a madman, and a fool. R——e's sermons, p. 47.

their

their proceedings are a continued series of religious policy.

I am now to apologize for the title of this pamphlet *, which some may think extremely improper and rude; but my reason for it was, that I might induce the fine gentlemen of the age to inspect it, and surprize them into the reading of a pamphlet on a religious subject, by this abrupt title page, which bears such a strong resemblance to their favourite expressions in common conversation: had I intitled it, *enthusiasm or methodism displayed*, the very notion of a spiritual treatise would have disgusted them, and my little production would never have found its way

* The first edition was published with the title of *Dte and be Damned*, only; but the candour with which it has been received, even as a religious piece, and the recommendation of several worthy gentlemen, who thought it might be more extensively useful, and more likely to be read, by some of the deluded methodists themselves, has induced the author to put a fuller title.

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into the catalogues of the polite coffee-houses: but, while under this concise title, a general, a minister of state, a chief magistrate, or even a player, may be hinted at; it is possible it may be bought out of curiosity, and read for want of other employment, or, as the French call it *pour passer le temps*: with the public, I may stand excused for this title, as it is, in fact, the very expression taken from the mouth of one who is called a preacher of righteousness.

I have only to add, that as the laws of the land most prudently forbid the disturbing a minister in his pulpit, and we are thereby obliged to hear all absurdities patiently, the press is the only proper means of publishing our objections to them; and where these absurdities affect the public, it is hoped they will excuse the man, who, with an honest intention exposes them, though he is guilty of inelegance

legance of expression, and is unable to stand the test of literary criticism—and will look upon the following pages in the light of friendly hints, which contain some miscellaneous remarks on a subject of importance, that may not be altogether unworthy of the public attention, though not conveyed in that necessary form and order, which are observed by those who are professed scholars.

D I E



impurities and abridgements; it was there-
fore necessary that those who had been
winners of our Saviour's exemption, should
in his glorious death, his glorious resurrection
and ascension, should record those
wonderful facts in writings, which might
be copied and translated into the
different languages; of that part of the
known world which then embraced Chris-
tendom, and from thence had been
to remote ages.

***** H E N the Christian religion
was first promulgated, I think
it cannot be disputed that it
was taught in its greatest pu-
rity and simplicity; and as it was not to
be confined to that age and country alone
wherein it was first published, it became
necessary to lay a proper foundation for
transmitting it down to the latest po-
sterity, in the same purity and simplicity
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in which it was first delivered by its heavenly founder. Oral tradition could never have answered this valuable purpose: we know how subject it has ever been to impurities and absurdities; it was therefore necessary that those who had been witnesses of our Saviour's exemplary life, his meritorious death, his glorious resurrection and ascension, should record these wonderful facts in writings, which might be copied, and likewise translated into the different languages, of that part of the known world which then embraced christianity, and from them be handed down to remotest ages.

For this valuable end the evangelists and apostles wrote; and these writings or scriptures we of this nation at present enjoy, in their greatest purity, in which the terms of our salvation are so clearly laid down, and our duty as christians so obvious, that he that runneth may read; they are intelligible to the meanest capacity, and want no forced interpretations, nor scholastic refinements, to teach the
great

great duties of a christian life. What then can have given rise to those disputes and quarrels, which have disgraced some of the principal professors and teachers of christianity, from the age of the apostles to the present times; and to those bloody wars, and inhuman massacres, on account of religion, which were unknown in the world, till the unhappy disputes amongst christians gave birth to these amazing horrors? St. Peter has told us in a few words, *the unstable and unlearned, because there are some things hard to be understood, wrest these as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction* *.

Designing men began to do this in his time; and they have continued the practice of it ever since; for had the apostle lived in our day and nation, he could not have given a more accurate description of the prevailing disposition of some of our spiritual guides, who through covetous-

* II St. Peter, ch. iii. v. 16.

ness, with feigned words make merchandize of the people*. It is to be feared they wrest the scriptures, not only to their own destruction, but to that of many thousands; at least, to all human appearance; but who dare set limits to the tender mercies of heaven! God forbid that we should pretend to shut the door of mercy against these false teachers, though they consign the bulk of mankind, that is, those who are not their disciples, to eternal damnation.

It is owing to the false interpretation of scripture to serve the particular purposes of some of the professors of christianity, that this pure, this holy religion, has assumed a different shape in almost every country where it has been propagated; and that even the doctrines of a Luther or Calvin, in travelling from one country to another, are so altered and disguised, that their great founders were they on earth, would hardly know their own dis-

* St. Peter, ch. ii, v. 3.

ciples;

ciples ; to this we owe the perverting the sense of the most obvious and easy texts of scripture, to serve the purposes of idolatry, superstition, and cruelty, in some countries, and of uncharitableness in others. How many passages of holy writ will not the catholic point out, to support the authority and infallibility of his *Pope*, and from the same pure fountains will he not draw the bloody water of persecution ? will he not quote authority from scripture, to canonize and then to adore men, of like infirmities with ourselves ? nay, will he not make use of the miracles wrought by our Saviour and his apostles to support all the frauds and impositions practised in base imitation of them, to delude credulous and weak minds ? *

* Believe me, the church in its infancy alone stood in need of miracles : wherever, therefore, men pretend to immediate inspiration from heaven, or to be able to work miracles, at this time of day when the christian church is established on a rock which never can be removed, always conclude that they are impostors ; and that their religion centers in worldly gain.

Every sect of religion arm their pretensions to superior rectitude, with texts of scripture; and it often happens that the same passages are used to support tenets as opposite to each other as light to darkness; for the truth of which I refer my readers to the writings of the founders of the various sects of christianity, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Having thus mentioned the general motives of wresting the scripture, such as the making them patronize superstition and cruelty, and serve the base purposes of avarice and ambition; I shall now confine myself to the various shapes christianity assumes at present in our day and nation, and endeavour to trace some of the causes of the disunion of christians amongst us, to the fountain head; namely, the wresting of the scriptures by the unlearned and unstable; and I may add, even by the learned, to promote the gratifications of their particular passions:

—And

—And if it can be proved according to a celebrated writer, ‘ that the disunion of
 ‘ christians is more prejudicial to the
 ‘ cause of christianity than the writings
 ‘ of its enemies,’ we shall have little reason to accuse the infidelity of the present age with so much warmth from the pulpit; as the cause of the cool reception christianity meets with amongst people of high rank and education: and we shall still have the less reason for this groundless charge, if what an eminent and universally admired writer * has said, be true, ‘ that infidelity is not the
 ‘ characteristic of this age; and that the
 ‘ works of a late noble lord, tho’ fraught
 ‘ with the very marrow of infidelity
 ‘ were not badly received.’ But divines will ever differ in opinion, and though this eminent writer tells us, ‘ that this
 ‘ age is not deep in speculations of infidelity,’ if you attend on some preachers, you will hear of nothing but the infidelity of the good people of England; and

* Dr. Browne in his Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times.

will

will be told that all our misfortunes, public or private, are owing to our living in a state of infidelity: I use their own words*: ‘ that nothing but the thin
 ‘ vital air which we breath, separates us
 ‘ from eternal damnation, and that unless
 ‘ we come unto Christ Jesus immediately,
 ‘ we shall all *die and be damn’d.*’ In answer to this I say, that the different methods of preaching the gospel, and the disunion of its professors, proceeding from their misinterpreting scripture to serve particular purposes, is the cause of that lukewarmness amongst christians, which

* The author of this pamphlet cannot write short hand; and therefore depended on his memory for the above passage, which was printed as exact as he could recollect it from Mr. R——’s own mouth, as delivered in the pulpit: But for the satisfaction of the curious, the real passage as it stands in Mr. R——’s sermons, on Solomon’s song now in print, is here inserted, “ shall you who fly with eager haste from temporal danger, be easy and careless, while the Almighty God is your enemy; and he may this moment come and get glory to all his attributes, by your everlasting destruction? Can you think yourselves secure in this case, while there is only this little light vapour in your nostrils between you and hell? p. 51.”

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they pretend to amend, by thundering *damnation* in their ears; and by giving it the harsh name of infidelity.

Ever since the reformation we have been clearing christianity from that cloud of superstition and error which the Romish clergy had thrown over it; and in this glorious undertaking we have as a nation hitherto succeeded, and established a church, in which the rites and ceremonies of the christian religion, as well as its doctrines, seem to be preserved in that purity and simplicity in which they were first taught and observed, and most agreeable to the plain, impartial interpretation of scripture.

Could we be content to stop here, as in all reason we ought, we should have no room to complain of so many different sects of christians, some of them filling our very fields and barns with unlearned and unstable teachers, spreading confusion and error throughout the land. These men, under a pretence of further

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reformation, refine away the very sense of scripture; and instead of a pure and holy religion, render christianity an unintelligible jargon of enthusiastic mysteries *.

* Mr. R—e speaking of the Godhead, p. 153, of the work before mentioned, thus explains the doctrine of the trinity. “Of his essence, of his personality, and of the office of the divine persons in the œconomy of the covenant, God has set before our eyes, in the agency of nature a lively picture: for the grand agent in nature is the air, which is one essence, whether it be rarefied to its smallest parts in the action of fire at the orb of the sun, or sent out in light, or returned in gross air to maintain and carry on this action of fire at the orb of the sun, in which soever of these three distinct operations it be employed, it is still air; and accordingly this unity of its essence, and distinction of its threefold agency, is declared in scripture to be the instituted type, in which we are to read the unity of the divine essence, and the offices of the three divine persons;” again, p. 154, “It pleased the father to get glory to the divine justice and holiness by demanding satisfaction for sin,—he was the avenger of sin, and therefore air in the action of fire is his emblem. It pleased the son to get glory to the divine love and mercy, by paying this satisfaction, and therefore his constant name is light. And it pleased the eternal spirit to get glory to all the divine attributes by inspiring dead sinners with a desire to be raised to newness of life, and then by breathing it into their souls, and carrying it on through the life of grace, until

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In former ages it was reckoned a labour of much study and learning to be able to give a just and instructive explanation of scripture: in our day every disciple of these sectaries not only throws a new light on difficult passages, but tells you with the utmost confidence, that unless you believe in his interpretation of these passages, ' you are in a state of ' damnation ;' and some of our methodists are arrived to such a pitch of arrogance as is almost incredible. A stripling who is under the immediate tutorship of their high priest, and is designed to enter into holy orders, after disputing some time on points of religion with a venerable clergyman of the established church, had the assurance, when he found he could not convince him by argument, to tell him plainly, that he and all his family were damned.

What can be the motives of their teachers for differing from the established

he bring them to the life of glory, and therefore he knows no other name in scripture than spirit or air in motion."

church, and erecting spacious edifices, capable of holding such vast congregations? Is it pure and unbiassed love for mankind? Is it a desire to settle christianity on a more sure and lasting foundation than it is at present? Or is it barely to recommend it with uncommon fervor and zeal? Surely they cannot lay claim to any of these motives; if they do, what must they think of the whole body of the clergy? Do not they shew a regard to the welfare of mankind and the propagation of christianity? Are there not a sufficient number of them labouring in the vineyard? Do not they endeavour to settle the christian religion on a sure foundation? Are not their societies for propagating the gospel in foreign parts; and the instructions given in the charity schools at home a sufficient proof that they use their utmost endeavours to transmit our holy religion in its native purity to posterity? Do not they in general recommend it from their pulpits with a becoming zeal and fervor? They do. But it is with decency and modesty,
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not enforcing it with *damnation* at the end of every sentence, but referring judgment and condemnation, with St. Paul, “ to the coming of the Lord, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart.” If therefore none of these laudable purposes engage them to congregate such multitudes, we must conclude that either ambition or interest is at the bottom of their extraordinary preachments. I know they will totally disclaim the latter, and even start at the charge, for they will tell you that they do not aspire after church preferment thereby to enrich themselves ; but in answer to this, give me leave to conjecture that there are many ways of being paid for their extraordinary services, perhaps adequate to the most valuable benefices * ;

* Upon a moderate computation the collections made at the two famous temples of the methodists, together with the quarterly and weekly contributions for seats and other expences, amount to more than the revenues of the two best bishopricks in the kingdom ; and till a public and fair account is published at least every

and that a negligent and careless air about temporal concerns, and an affected disregard of decency in apparel, do not always denote poverty and abstemiousness.

There is a secret pride in some men's apparent humility ; and it is often found that great wealth and a mean personal appearance are not incompatible ; and until it can be proved that these over righteous teachers are not amassing riches by contributions from their disciples, I shall not readily acquit them of the charge of having worldly interest in their view.

A popular preacher, (who within the very walls of our church) exalts himself into the judgment seat of his lord and master, and passes sentence of damnation on the admiring croud, has lately assumed the external appearance of indigence. I

every six months of the money received by the managers of these houses, it may reasonably be imagined that they "make merchandize of the people."

suppose he has altered his opinion, and now thinks that a spruce appearance is not consistent with the humility of the gospel. Let not him who is so remarkably uncharitable as to damn mankind by wholesale, wonder at my suspecting that worldly interest is his aim; my accusation amounts only to suspicion; his sentences of damnation are always peremptory; and often fatal.

Since then I have shewn that it is not improbable, but that some of these teachers may be influenced by self-interest, and having no extraordinary talents to recommend them to church preferment, may have found this method of preaching answer their purpose as well:—let us wave our further opinion on this head, and proceed to examine how far ambition spurs them on to sow the seeds of disunion among christians.

There are two sorts of ambition, worldly and spiritual. Their presumption

tion and self-conceit deprive them of all hopes of gratifying the former ; but is the very foundation of their possessing the highest enjoyments of the latter ; and I make no doubt but that there is more pride in the heart of him who has founded a tabernacle, than in his whose modest merit has raised him to an episcopal see. Self-conceit and presumption I chuse to distinguish as the grand characteristics of spiritual pride : these are the steps by which they ascend the ladder of spiritual ambition, and gain the summit of their grandeur, which is an extensive power over deluded multitudes ; and a degree of reverence and homage from the vulgar, which we can never suppose was paid even to the apostles, nor indeed required by them. Self-conceit whispers in their ears that they are better men and better christians than their brethren :—that they are selected shepherds to feed the flock of Christ, hence they begin to dive into scripture for passages which they wrest

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in favour of their terrific form of preaching the gospel, and as fear is ever predominant in weak minds, they endeavour to produce vouchers from holy writ to terrify the ignorant into the belief of their particular systems, making their appeals to the passion of fear, instead of endeavouring to implant in the minds of men a love of true religion, and a lively faith in Christ, by mild persuasives and the cool dictates of reason and argument; these will not serve their particular purposes; they are conscious that the generality of the clergy teach the gospel in this laudable manner; and therefore if they only join in the same common method there will be no opportunity of distinguishing themselves, nor any pretence for setting themselves up as the lights of the world, and the only infallible guides to eternal salvation.

In fact it is the business of every founder of any new sect of christians in this kingdom, to endeavour to find out some defect in the manner of preaching,

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and in the mode of worship practised by the regular clergy ; hence calumny, and false accusation, branding the characters of our most eminent divines with negligence and inattention to the great duties of their office, and the most impudent and unlimited charges against the laity in general, for atheism and infidelity, at the very time they are joining in the public worship of the church, and thereby assenting to the truth of the christian religion. Would it not shock any foreigner, who understood our language, to hear a preacher in a christian congregation, tell his audience, “ That they are a set of infidels, that their attendance on the public worship of God, and their living in the exactest observation of all moral virtues, are but shining sins in the sight of God, unless they come unto Christ, and wash themselves in the blood of the Lamb ?” would he not be further surprised to hear another of these zealous preachers tell you, that, “ the majority of this great and flourishing kingdom live without Christ in their hearts :

“ are deaf to his awakening calls deli-
 “ vered by these his righteous ministers,
 “ and slumber on in their sins, acting all
 “ manner of abominations, and eagerly
 “ pursuing *eternal damnation*, that, in this
 “ situation, their wives, their children,
 “ their estates and effects are given them
 “ for a curse; that they had better part
 “ with them all, than want that *inward*
 “ *light* and grace in their hearts, without
 “ which there is no going to heaven:
 “ that the strait gate that leads to eternal
 “ happiness is too narrow for splendid
 “ equipages, and gaudy apparel, and all
 “ the possessors of these must go into
 “ outer darkness?” These and such like
 low and unmanly expressions make up
 great part of their sermons, calculated to
 inspire vulgar minds, with a great vene-
 ration for the preacher, and an utter con-
 tempt of all persons of rank and fortune,
 in comparison of whom they think them-
 selves saints on earth—. Having suc-
 ceeded thus far, the enthusiastic preacher
 secures to himself, by expatiating on the
 heinousness of apostatizing from him, by

enlarging on the great and meritorious sufferings he has undergone for the sake of their souls, and from preaching on the passion of our Saviour, makes an easy (though impious) transition to his own indefatigable services, tells his children of God, " what revilings and buffetings he has met with—how hard he has laboured in the vineyard of Christ—how he has struggled for the preservation of their precious souls,—how he has been despised, spit upon, turned out of cities, and been rejected of men, for doing God's work, for seating Christ in their hearts ;" and thus with the most powerful vociferation, and enthusiastic warmth, he works on the passions of the gaping multitude, till the whole congregation resounds with sobs and sighs ; and spiritual groanings, which he receives as incense offered to his superior piety and excellence ;* and,

* Some of these sobs and sighs however, we are assured from good authority do not proceed from the heart ; but are contributions towards keeping up the spiritual farce, performed by a set of mercenaries who have a weekly allowance for their pious labours.

in the warmth of his imagination, conceits himself to be no less than the great apostle to the Gentiles, or perhaps several degrees above him. Thus he gratifies his spiritual pride, and holds in contempt all the becoming dignities of the established church; and, in this elevated station of his own making, he does not confine himself to exhortations and edifications, but deals in denunciations of wrath and eternal damnation, and assumes as much arbitrary power over the consciences of men (by means of these engines of terror) as any bishop of Rome whatever.

The upright and conscientious clergyman who regularly performs the duties of his office in his church, is forced to preach to very thin congregations; for most of the poorer sort, servants especially, are not content to hear sound morality, and the pure doctrines of christianity at their parish churches, they are continually running after every popular enthusiast, who rails at their superiors, and tells them

them " He is commissioned to call them
 " to an adoption in Christ, to be his
 " elect, and to make them rich indeed,
 " and make them far better men than
 " their worldly masters : " to him there-
 fore they bow and cringe, and by him
 they are taught to believe such an instan-
 taneous conversion worked in their souls,
 that they are regenerate, quite new
 creatures, and that all the rest of man-
 kind are mere dross, except those of the
 same persuasion.

By means of such flattering but delu-
 sive doctrines they are led into contribu-
 tions for defraying the expences of
 preaching the gospel out of the pale of the
 church ; and thus an unnecessary charge
 is laid on those who might hear the gos-
 pel at their own parish churches with-
 out it ; but this I suppose will be evaded
 by saying, with their usual candour, that
 our divines do not take so much pains to
 convert sinners to repentance as they do ; *

* There are several persons at present in our church,
 of great leisure and abilities ; and it is much to be
 wished

and indeed, if the most nonsensical harangues, devoid of all form and order, and very-often of decency itself, be the proper method of preaching, and the best means of conversion; these are the men to follow; these are the only true divines.

If this spiritual pride, which I have here given a sketch of, has a place in the heart of the preacher, it will naturally be transmitted to his disciples; and every man's experience will furnish him with instances amongst his acquaintance, of the behaviour of those who are thus infected: they condemn all discourses on morality, and the good conduct of life: they take it for granted, that the world believes them to be complete observers of all the social virtues; and this they are led into by the example of their teachers, who scarce ever touch upon

wished they would employ them, in explaining the song of songs.' Preface to R——e's discourses on the song: he likewise in the same place dictates to these men of great abilities and leisure, what method they ought to take in explaining of it.

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these subjects from the pulpit, either looking upon it as beneath the excellence of their office, or concluding, that those of their own persuasion pay such a strict regard to the moral law, that they never violate any part of it, and consequently can never need admonitions on that head. This high opinion of themselves, thus openly countenanced from the pulpit, they carry into life, and build on it such arrogant behaviour and insolent conduct, as must amaze and astonish every man who has the use of reason : their speeches are full of contempt of all such as have not the *light within*, and all degrees of subordination to superiors they must in their hearts despise, because they look upon their earthly masters, relations, and friends, (if they are not methodists) as beings far inferior to themselves, who are the elect of the Lord ; hence they talk of the dread sovereign of heaven and earth with the greatest familiarity, and as from his own mouth, pass sentence on every indiscreet word or action

action of their neighbours, nay urge his authority for disobedience of the just commands of their superiors.

A small anecdote will place this in a clearer light. "Some time since in a
 "very popular city of this kingdom, a
 "great disturbance arose about one of
 "the itinerant, unstable, and unlearned
 "teachers,—who, from a good mender
 "of old staves, instantaneously became a
 "botcher of wounded souls; but un-
 "happily at last was guilty of so
 "many open immoralities, that the
 "bishop of the diocese thought pro-
 "per to prosecute him in the eccle-
 "siastical court, in which he was
 "most justly condemned;—the contest
 "became warm, and a very worthy ge-
 "neral, who had the command of some
 "soldiers quartered in the town, pru-
 "dently gave orders that none of his
 "men should attend this preacher, fearing
 "they should be induced to interfere in
 "the dispute, and greatly add to the dis-
 "turbances already begun: In the even-
 "ing

"ing he was informed that one of his
 "men had disobeyed his orders; he sent
 "for him, demanded the reason of his
 "disobedience, which he knew might
 "be attended with severe military dis-
 "cipline? The soldier told him, that it
 "was true he had ordered him not to
 "attend the preacher, but that a greater
 "commander had engaged him to neg-
 "lect his orders, for he had promised
 "God-Almighty to meet him at the
 "Castle-hill, to hear his minister at six
 "o'clock exactly: the general asked
 "him how often he had been at sermon?
 "To which he replied, but once before,
 "but had conversed with the preacher
 "twice in private."

Now let any man judge what must be
 the pride and presumption of an old disci-
 ple, when a new one could talk thus fa-
 miliarly of the Deity. "However these
 "empirics in theology may boast of such
 "instantaneous conversions of the loof-
 "est and most profligate of mankind,"
 says an eminent divine, "and pretend
 " the

“ the most sudden changes in moral cha-
 “ racters, let me not envy them, but
 “ heartily wish them more frequent and
 “ sincere ; for it is much to be doubted
 “ whether this method of dealing with
 “ men be agreeable to the course of di-
 “ vine providence in the works of nature
 “ or dispensations of grace. Time and
 “ means must be allowed for real changes.
 “ The seeds of virtue may be sown in an
 “ instant, the growth and perfection
 “ must be gradual.”

The *light within*, which the methodists
 and others so strongly contend for, is no
 other than the effect of great presump-
 tion and spiritual pride : it is called by
 some of them *divine inspiration* ; and
 though they are not able to perform any
 miracles, yet they confidently assert that
 their teachers are no less inspired than
 the apostles, who gave those evident and
 well attested proofs of their divine com-
 missions. What wonder then if these
 teachers (thus inspired) should assume
 an authority to condemn to utter per-
 dition,

dition, all who dissent from them in opinion; or, in other words, all who are not contributors to the sect they have established.

This *light within*, or *inspiration*, calls the meanest and most illiterate mechanic to the sacred functions of the ministry; it enables him to illustrate the divine mysteries of revelation; and at once constitutes him a fit instrument of converting sinners to repentance, and of preserving and comforting those who have already experienced the saving grace, communicated to them by this inward light.

This inspiration serves to promote subscriptions and contributions for new assemblies in all parts of the town, under the direction of these unlearned and unstable pastors. Thus our churches, which are conveniently and abundantly planted in all parts of the metropolis, are more and more deserted, and the cause of it unjustly imputed to the profaneness and wicked-

wickedness of the age, when at the same time thousands and ten thousands of the deluded multitude are so far from a total disregard of all religion, that they are running in droves after every new doctrine; and readily embracing every pretended reformation of our holy religion, which it seems is not taught in the established church with sufficient purity for those very people, who are on all hands charged as a nation with open profaneness and a total neglect of religion.

The preacher who is followed by multitudes, and he who is almost totally deserted, equally exclaim against the impiety of the age with the greatest injustice; for it is owing to the superlative righteousness of some men, and their growing tired of the good old discipline of the established church, that the latter is deserted, and to a timidity and unbecoming diffidence of the sufficiency of the ordinary practice of piety (which can only be removed by the light within,) that the former is indebted for the great increase

crease of his congregation : but that age can never be distinguished for infidelity and atheism, in which the deepest errors of fanaticism prevail ; nor that city, wherein lectures upon lectures are daily held at all hours and all seasons for the encouragement and support of enthusiastic rant ; and for the maintenance of every illiterate torturer of holy writ, who thinks proper to leave his ordinary vocation, (and by the assistance of the *light within*) to usurp the authority of Christ and his apostles, and under the specious pretence of reformation of manners, to fill his own purse, and revel in unbounded luxury *.

* A certain great man amongst the methodists, once on a sabbath-day preached so excellent a sermon, that a well disposed stranger was so moved by it, that he was desirous of becoming a convert, and with that pious intent, intreated the favour of dining with the preacher, which was granted. The pious host before dinner made several apologies for the plainness of the entertainment his guest was to expect, alledging as an excuse that his lady never expected any body on the sabbath, nor did he admit any one but on such godly

It is matter of admiration that no writer has ever taken notice of the most striking proof, that temporal interest is the grand point that the leaders of the famous sect of methodists have in view. I mean their delusive and subtle compliance with most of the rites and ceremonies of the church of England; but more especially with that part of it which best serves their purpose, the book of common prayer. The pretended purity of the methodists, their system of reformation, their singularity of opinion in respect to the rigid observation of the sabbath, frequenting play-houses, and playing at cards, &c. and their notions about faith; regeneration, justification, free will, imputed righteousness, and se-

occasions as the present. Dinner entered soon after; and consisted of every delicacy the season afforded, at which the gentleman expressed some surprize, and the preacher told him they were only *deodands*, God's gifts, trifles sent him by well disposed christians. This scene however prevented the young gentleman from becoming a convert; but made him a better member of the established church than he had been heretofore.

veral

veral other curious doctrines that formerly furnished the world with so many volumes of useless lumber, are nicely conformable to the tenets of the once famous pope of Geneva, John Calvin; who then but would imagine that the congregations of our modern fanatics should be made up of presbyterians and independants, or at least that their mode of worship should be conformable to theirs, since their opinions are almost one and the same? "But beware of mistakes," says their high priest to himself, at his first setting out on his journey to that pinnacle of worldly glory which he has now arrived at, "if I make use of
 "extemporary prayer alone, and reject
 "the form of prayer of the established
 "church, I shall indeed be admired by
 "my brother dissenters; and by my peculiar eloquence may establish a pretty
 "little congregation from the several
 "meeting houses about town; but it
 "will be at most but a poor benefice,
 "little better than a curacy, which I
 "might have hoped for without going
 out

“ out of the common road, better then com-
 “ ply with—this established form, and
 “ daily read it with enthusiastic rapture,
 “ though I am well convinced that many
 “ sentences in it ought to be expunged
 “ as the relics of popery : and that others
 “ directly contradict many of my favour-
 “ ite doctrines by which I am to gain the
 “ multitude.”

Rightly judged, thou uncommon ge-
 nius, who, hadst thou been bred to state
 affairs, wouldst have buried in oblivion
 the names of Wolsey, Machiavel, and
 Walpole !

We all know how difficult a task it is
 to combat and surmount the prejudices
 of education ; and I believe it will be
 allowed that the generality of our com-
 mon people, receive the earliest impres-
 sions in favour of the Common Prayer-
 book ; this once granted, we shall pre-
 sently see how artfully the politician of
 Moorfields has played his card to fill
 both houses. It is a common argument

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in the mouths of his disciples when employed in the great work of converting poor dead souls, that going to Tottenham-court is the same as going to a parish church for that they there make use of that excellent form of worship, the common prayer-book: by this bait multitudes are allured; and when once drawn to the rendezvous, their passions are wrought upon in a manner too well known to need enlarging upon. The strength and security of a nation consists in the number of its inhabitants, and the same may be said of every religious body politic; but the analogy grows stronger, if we consider that the principal succour acquired by popularity, is an ample revenue to support the dignity and honour of a nation. Now the increase of the multitudes that resort to both houses in the other case, produces the same advantage to the high priest, who is the owner, and who, if I am rightly informed, will take tythes in kind, rather than fail, where cash is not to be had. How the immense sums so

raised are disposed of, is another question, but unworthy our notice, if they are improperly raised ; and that they are, I believe no man will deny who has not lost the use of his reason in the gloomy paths of frantic enthusiasm.

Surely that must needs be a pious age in which any mechanic who deems himself called to the ministry by *inspiration*, if he is able to pay for licensing a house, opens it as a christian church, and is sure to have a sufficient number of disciples, either to feed his spiritual pride, by allowing his call from within, or by contributions to support him in an easier way of life than his situation and circumstances would otherwise have allowed of. Strange effect of credulity in a christian country, and under the eye of the best disciplined church on earth, that men should be deemed an inspired preacher, and followed from one end of the town to the other, who cannot speak good English, and do not understand the first rudiments of their native tongue!

Was their inspiration really from heaven, certainly that fountain of goodness from whence flowed the gift of divers tongues to the apostles would enable these preachers to speak at least in the language of common sense, that the learned as well as the unlearned, might partake of the benefit of their pious instructions, and not depart from their assemblies with the utmost horror, shocked at men's preaching the gospel in the meanest and most indecent manner, using the lowest and most unmanly, and sometimes the rudest expressions, in their addresses to mankind, on the noblest and most exalted subject that ever dignified the tongue of eloquence; and if all orders of men have an equal claim to the preacher's concern for their immortal souls, how careful ought he to be, to speak in the language of men, who ascends a pulpit in this our day, when we make so much use of our intellectual powers, and require regular arguments to convince us of the truth of any doctrine.

Our

Our Saviour shewed the same readiness to do acts of mercy for the rich as the poor; but these his pretended disciples, instead of drawing them to christianity, by the cords of love, openly abuse and rail at them, and even forbid them their places of worship, if they happen to drop into them by accident: an excellent method this is of converting those whose example might lead multitudes into the paths of righteousness, which they pretend to teach the knowledge of. “ But, “ poor souls, say these charitable divines, “ and their lay-teachers, let them alone, “ (meaning the rich) they are going to “ hell headlong in their fine coaches; and “ would to God they would go by themselves, and not take their servants along “ with them; but what with their dining so late on the sabbath, and other “ diabolical contrivances, the poor servants are hindered from attending the “ words of life, and must go to hell with “ their vile masters*.”

* Part of a sermon preached in the neighbourhood of Mark Lane.

Here

Here is fine reasoning; are not these equitable appeals to men of superior birth and education? Is this the proper method of speaking of our *senators*, our *magistrates*, our *gentry*, and our *merchants*, before a giddy ignorant mob? certainly no. When a congregation is assembled, and partly composed of persons of rank and fortune, a degree of reverence to his superiors will guide the modest and truly christian preacher, and teach him more becoming language. The example of our Saviour, who, even when he was reviled, reviled not again, will teach him more humility than to pronounce sentence of condemnation without authority, and even without using the decent and necessary means of amending those whom they thus instantaneously *damn*. If vulgar and uncharitable expressions, if a brutal and unrelenting spirit of *damning* all to *Hell* who are not of a particular sect, be the effect of the *light within*, may the all-wise and infinitely kind Creator of the universe (who causeth his sun to shine on the just and the unjust,) preserve

serve us in our happy darkness, and suffer us not to be led into temptation by these inspired teachers—these false lights of the world.

I would not here be understood to insinuate, that a preacher should be ashamed to name such a place as *hell* before a polite audience. This is an extreme on the other side : I only would have it remembered, that there is a way of convincing men of the beauty of holiness, and the amiableness of christianity, by sound reason and argument, which has been practised with success by the most eminent divines in all ages since the foundation of christianity, and is better adapted to teach the kind and charitable precepts of the gospel, than this enthusiastic thundering out *damnation* at the end of every sentence.

Be ye wise as serpents, but harmless as doves, says our saviour ; but are these the innocent doves, who instruct men to go home, and tell every branch of their family—

lies, and perhaps their whole neighbourhood, that ~~they~~ they are in a state of *damnation*, if they have not the *light within*, or, in other words, if they are not followers of the most distinguished enthusiastic preachers. Would not one think that these men had read our Saviour's precept thus: "Seem ye innocent as doves, but be venomous as serpents," since with their bitter tongues they thus curse mankind, and represent the Deity as an implacable Being, not to be appeased but by continual repetitions of enthusiastic rant, and the most horrid barbarisms.

Having mentioned the *light within*, or *inward inspiration*, give me leave to observe, that if it is derived from heaven, as they assert, whatever experimental knowledge they may have of it within themselves, yet in order to evince reasonable men of the truth of this assertion, it will be necessary that it should enable them to work some miracle; and we have the highest reason to expect this
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from the goodness of God, who always afforded this evidence of their divine commission to his inspired ministers, and would certainly give this testimony to our modern enthusiasts, whenever their own authority failed of converting sinners to repentance and salvation, which is the great end of the christian dispensation. And if these men were really the chosen priests of the most high God, he would most certainly in his great mercy, give some stronger testimony of it, than their bare assertion, to convince an unbelieving age, and not let eternal salvation be confined to a few sectaries: since then no man can have any other evidence of a preacher's *inspiration*, than miracles, which are the natural proofs of it, established by scripture, and allowed by reason; and no such evidence has yet appeared for the distinguished enthusiastic preachers of our day, let us candidly hope they are mistaken about this *inward light*, and believe, that it is the effect of a weak deluded imagination, puffed up with a vain conceit of its own impor-

tance, and apt to fancy every enthusiastic rhapsody to be an inspiration from above; and let us not rest a point of so great importance to us as our eternal salvation on the mere *ipse dixit* of a distempered brain.

“ When God,” says a late eminent writer, “ is pleased to make any extraordinary manifestation of his will, he does not, “ I presume, supercede the use of our “ natural faculties, or take away the ordinary assistance of that understanding “ with which he has endowed us. By “ this alone indeed we are qualified to “ discern the nature and meaning of any “ new lights or discoveries, which he “ may vouchsafe to communicate to us : “ nor ought we to receive them as lights “ communicated by him, without such a “ previous examination.

“ I do not find that the author of our “ religion, or those who were commissioned “ by him to teach it to the world, ever required men to yield their assent, before “ they had afforded them the proper evidence on which it might be founded; or that

“ that they referred them to their inward
 “ *feelings and impressions*, as that proper
 “ evidence *.”

The modern infidels, who heartily wish our religion to be false, but cannot with all their art prove it so, may reasonably retort on these men, that they do not pretend to prove the truth of it; but rest it solely on the *light within*, which is the key of all spiritual knowledge; and at once makes a man a christian.

What a scandal it is to christianity, that men should value themselves more upon being called after the name of any particular sect, than on the practice of those duties which constitute the character of a good christian! The question is not now, who is the most charitable and devout, who is most in favour with God and man, for uncommon piety to the

* Principles and practices of the methodists further considered, in a letter to the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield, p. 23, p. 49.

one, and universal love and benevolence to the other? But who has received the *light within*? Who has experienced the wildest extasies, the most enthusiastic raptures, and hurried away by the workings of a deluded imagination, has lent the greatest assistance towards forwarding the purposes of designing preachers, who want to catch the eye, to be the leaders of *sects*, to give names to multitudes, to be *admired* or *enriched*. View the effects of the modern spirit called by the false name of divine inspiration. It alternately sings, it groans, it sighs, it weeps, it thunders out damnation, it bawls in tabernacles, it raves in our streets, it exclaims in our houses. It distinguishes itself from the spirit of truth, by its doctrines, it teaches, for the peaceable, charitable, compassionate dictates of the holy spirit of God, the diabolical dictates of the spirit of delusion: heresies, cursings, and revilings.

From these hints on the *light within*, let me now proceed to touch upon the

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confessions required more especially from the female part of their followers, preparatory to the receiving this *inward light*; confessions generally taken at private meetings, and, in my humble opinion, falling little short of the auricular confessions so much practised in the Romish church. Do not these examinations serve to establish the authority of the priest, and often to expose weaknesses in families, and particular persons, which may be turned to the advantage of designing men; and if these inspired priests will answer for their own purity and integrity, surely they will not pretend to do it for all their lay-teachers.

If they will not, as I think they cannot, certainly this kind of confession is unwarrantable, and neither that, nor the *light within*, were ever assumed by those celebrated writers, and successful preachers, *Tilletson, South, &c.* whose names will stand on record, as eminent ornaments of the christian religion, when every species of *enthusiasm* and *error* shall be buried in oblivion.

That

That the public may in some measure be satisfied of the existence of these particular confessions, I shall here insert a few bills faithfully copied from the originals, now in my hands, which were offered to be put up in a church not far from Temple-Bar, at such time only as a gentleman often mentioned in this little work, was to preach. I chuse to give them in their own orthography; and I leave the world to judge what sort of private tutoring the poor wretches must have had who composed them.

I.

The prayers of this congregation is desired for a woman in dispare of God's *mercy*.

II.

Prayers of this congrection are disired for an *ancient woman* that disires to know God.

III.

Sir, The prayers of this congregation are desired for a person *that liveth in a particular sin*, though he prays to *Jesus* and tryeth to conquer it. *Still when it cometh in his way*, is guilty of it again.

IV.

The prayers of this congregation are desired for a person in a deep consumption of body, and spiritually blind.

V.

The prayers of this congregation is desired for the conversion of a parent and other near and dear relations.

VI.

Prayers is desired for a poor widow that is full of doubts by hearing how far a hypocrite may go, and still be a hypocrite, and humbly desires of the Lord to drive away the host of Philistians, that she may draw water out of the wells of salvation. Amen.

Before I conclude these cursory remarks on the conduct of those who draw off the vulgar from their attendance on their parish ministers, let me just take notice of the usual behaviour of an enthusiastic mob towards one of their admired preachers. No sooner does he descend from the pulpit, but the pious converts press around him; and, in spite of

of all opposition, force their way to his sacred person, happy if they can but touch the hem of his garment, but happier still if they can but conduct him amidst *sighs* and *sobs* to the vestry, and there by turns take a peep at this saint upon earth, or, if favoured with access, feed his abundant vanity with the most fulsome encomiums on his great and unwearied attention to the concerns of their precious souls. How much more like the gospel humility would it be, to see one of these divines turn to the attending croud, and tell them to go regularly to their parish churches, and bring sufficient proofs from thence of the inability of the ministers, (to whose care they are committed) to teach them the law and the gospel, and that till then they should not assemble in such multitudes and so far from their home, as if all the clergy of the established church were ignorant, or unwilling to teach them. This behaviour would be more like a christian priest, than ascending the pulpit to rail at their brethren; and by insinuating, that

that they neglect their duty, to draw aside their congregations, and engage people to contribute to their own private meetings and assemblies. I would gladly hear of such an exhortation as the above; it would shew more candor, however, I am afraid, than would be consistent with their *interest*.

From the whole I must conclude, that these men have no foundation from scripture, reason, or common humanity, to assert that all men must *die and be damned*, who are not of their persuasion, or, in other words, who have not experienced the light within, much less to be so blasphemous as to say, 'Hear it from the mouth of the lord,' such expressions are intolerable before a mixed congregation of christians. If what I have said should tempt any one to search further into the ways of these men, if he will but take the pure unpolluted word of God, contained in the scriptures for his guide, and make use of his intellectual powers as that very scripture requires him to do, he will have

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more and more reason to believe, that such preachers are not the true servants of the most high God, who is long-suffering, and of great kindness, who doth not reward men after their iniquities, nor punish them according to their sins; whose tender mercies are over all his works, who is there described to be a God of love, of infinite compassion, and surpassing mercy.

Will such a gracious being, plunge us into the depths of despair, and sentence us to eternal damnation for doubting in matters of faith? Or will he doom us to utter darkness for want of the light within? impious thought! how contrary this to the amiable declarations of mercy delivered by his son. He told a man who had only in part fulfilled the moral law, that he was not far from the kingdom of heaven: how mild is his reproof to Martha, who, as mistress of the family, was not only too busy in preparing an entertainment for him, but neglected attending

ing on his divine precepts, and wanted likewise to take her sister from her devotions. ‘Martha! Martha! says he, ‘thou art cumbered about many things, ‘but one thing is needful, &c.’ Not according to the present practice of his pretended disciples in parallel cases, who say to people of rank and fortune. ‘Ye are busy in preparing your entertainments, &c. which makes ye neglect the ‘words of life, ye will go to *hell*, ye will ‘*die and be damned.*’

Examine candidly the precepts and doctrines preached by our Saviour, and the life he led on earth.

His whole sermon on the mount breaths the warmest spirit of peace and charity; and so far is he from saying, according to our modern enthusiasts, that good works is only washing the outside of the platter, (I use their own words) that he seems to have made it his peculiar care to establish the noblest system of morality; and to connect it with our very beings as christians.

View

View him in his life and conversation, how condescending! how mild! how benevolent! see him on every occasion, exercising his divine power, in acts of mercy and compassion, without respect of persons, or persuasions, rejecting the prayers of neither rich nor poor, Jew nor Gentile, when implored to relieve the bodily infirmities they laboured under, and, by the kindest demonstrations of love, convincing men of the amiableness of his holy religion, and the great charitableness of its principles.

The more you view this portrait of Christ, the greater the unlikeness appears between him and our modern enthusiasts. Did he ever exalt his voice, and disfigure his features, with enthusiastic rage, to *damn* the greatest part of his audience? No: he very rarely expressed himself in austere terms; and if he did, was not he the Lord and giver of life? And were not his denunciations chiefly against those who had disputed his authority, mocked his precepts, and tempted the Holy-One
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of Israel? Did he appoint any one of his apostles to lord it over his heritage, and revile his brethren? No; yet his chosen ministers were but twelve in number, whereas, I trust in God, that he has now many hundreds in our established churches, *who both by their lives and doctrines set forth his true and lively word*, and yet have been charged with ignorance of christianity, and neglect of their duty, with a view of perverting the weak members of their congregations, and of turning them aside to hear the gospel, inhumanly mangled, and cruelly misinterpreted, to serve the purposes of *interest or ambition*. Give but as diligent and unbiaſſed an attention to your own reading of the scriptures, as you do to the false interpretation of it; by these *men*, and you will soon find the great disparity between their lives and that of our saviour, betwixt their doctrines and his, and when once you are convinced that there is no occasion for any extraordinary impulses, or fallacious light within, to enable you to practise the great truths of the gospel, and that a
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most use of your reason, joined to a pious disposition to believe the sacred mysteries of our holy religion as consonant to that reason, is all the light within, that is required of you; you will then seriously and devoutly attend on your parochial ministers, and be every day more and more convinced of their ability, integrity, and industry to make you good christians, and useful members of society: to their care I recommend you, and heartily wish you may regard the advice given you, as flowing from a heart warmed with sincere love of mankind, and willing to distinguish true religion from fanaticism and error, to oppose the amiable doctrines of universal love and charity, to the churlish tenets of enthusiasm, and to recommend unity among christians, from a view of the unamiableness of dissention.

May the goodness of the intention answer for the deficiencies of the execution; and these remarks experience that christian charity they were designed to promote.

F I N I S.